

Session One
Overview: *The Debilitator*

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The NDEP strongly encourages inviting a medical person (health care provider or certified diabetes educator) to participate in any sessions that you conduct to provide support for the discussion and to answer any specific medical questions that may arise.

This module for the overview session focuses largely on reinforcing some facts about diabetes and on probing emotions evoked by viewing the film *The Debilitator*. This module is a good choice if you are working with a group on a one-time basis and the participants don't know each other. It also works well as the first session in a series of sessions over weeks or months with the same participants.

For your convenience, this first session is heavily scripted; it contains detailed notes on what you can say to the group to facilitate discussion. Feel free to use either this script or your own words to lead the discussion.

Background

Diabetes is the sixth leading cause of death in the United States. Diabetes is also a major contributor to heart disease, which is the nation's number one cause of death. Diabetes and its complications disproportionately affect African Americans. The more that people understand about diabetes, how it causes complications, and what they can do to control and prevent it, the better equipped they will be to take action. The film *The Debilitator* can be used to raise awareness of diabetes, to educate viewers about the link between diabetes and heart disease, and to direct viewers to action steps that they can take to control and prevent diabetes. Diabetes can be a "debilitator" because it can wear down (or debilitate) a person's energy and well-being, but as Calvin Dixon shows, this does not have to happen. A person can take charge and control diabetes.

Objectives

1. To describe the actions that a person can take to control type 2 diabetes.
2. To discuss the role of the family in supporting a person with diabetes.



Time needed for the session: a minimum of 60 minutes (including 30 minutes for watching the film).

Materials

For instructions on borrowing *The Debilitator* film, see page 4 of this guide.

The handout *4 Steps to Control Your Diabetes for Life* can be found behind the Handouts tab at the end of this guide. This handout is also available in Spanish at http://ndep.nih.gov/diabetes/pubs/4_Steps_Spanish.pdf.

- DVD of the film *The Debilitator*.
- DVD player/TV monitor.
- Handout: NDEP brochure *4 Steps to Control Your Diabetes for Life* (at least one copy for each participant). Use the *NDEP Publications Order Form* at the end of this guide to order this handout and other NDEP materials referenced in this guide by fax or mail, or go to the Web site <http://www.ndep.nih.gov> to order online or to download the materials.
- Optional: Flipchart or blackboard for writing down key words from discussion.

Method

Conduct a facilitated discussion (group discussion with a leader asking stimulation questions).

Introduction

1. **Say:** Hello. I'd like to welcome you all here today for our group discussion on the effects of diabetes on people with the disease, their families, and their friends. Before we get started, I'd like to ask you a few questions. *[Request that participants raise their hand in response to your questions.]* How many of you either have diabetes or have someone in your immediate family with diabetes? Okay, keep your hands

raised. How many of you others have a close friend or coworker with diabetes? *[Most of the group should have their hands raised. Instruct everyone to look around the room at the number of people affected by diabetes.]*

Wow, it's amazing to see how many people are affected by diabetes. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), there are one million new cases of diabetes in the United States each year. I want you all to think about this fact for a minute. This disease is very serious and has complications that can cause heart disease, blindness, impotence, and many more health conditions. But before we go more deeply into our discussion of diabetes, let's introduce ourselves. My name is _____, and I'll be facilitating our discussion today. I'm glad that you are here to share your story and learn more about diabetes. *[Ask participants to introduce themselves.]*

Now, let's get back to this discussion. Some people don't realize how serious diabetes is. Did you know that diabetes is the sixth leading cause of death in the United States, and that there is a strong link between diabetes and heart disease? In fact, more people with diabetes die of heart disease than of any other cause. We have to do something to help educate each other about how to prevent and control diabetes.



2. **Say:** We're going to watch a 30-minute film called *The Debilitator*. It's about an African American man and his life with diabetes. After we watch the film, we'll have a short discussion. Your comments are all very important, so I ask that we please respect each other and our time here by speaking one at a time. The discussion should last about _____ minutes or so. *[Let the group know how much time you have allotted for discussion—usually 30 to 60 minutes.]*

Optional if your organization has the resources:

Say: After the film and discussion, you'll receive a small token of our appreciation for your participation and your willingness to learn about diabetes.

3. **Ask the group:** Are there any questions at this point? If not, let's get started. You may want to take notes as you watch the film.

Optional if your organization has the resources:

Say: Refreshments are on the table, so please help yourselves. *[Make sure that only healthful snacks are served.]*



DVD

Show the Film

After-Film Discussion

[When the film is over, look out at the participants to see if any are eager to speak. If so, let them comment on the film. If not, move on to the first question.]

1. **Say:** Wow. That was a powerful film. It had a lot of key messages for Calvin and his family. Tell me how this film made you feel and why. *[In all cases, wait for open, voluntary responses; call on people who look as if they have something to say. When necessary, probe for the following emotions: fear, sadness, and hope. Allow each participant about 3 minutes to express his or her feelings and then move to the next person.]*
2. **Ask:** What role did the family members play in the life of this man with diabetes? How important were the family members to Calvin's survival? *[Probe your audience by giving a few lead-in examples of the family's role; for instance, the mother's choice of what to cook for dinner, the children exercising with their father, and the family making sure that Calvin takes his medications regularly.]*
3. **Ask:** Can you relate to this family? In what ways? *[Discuss relationships within families, and ask members of the group to share their personal stories relating to a family member or close friend.]*
4. **Ask:** If you had been in Calvin's shoes, how many of you would have actually listened to the doctor and gone to the diabetes support group meeting? *[If you need to probe for comments, call on different people in the group.]*

5. **Ask:** Does anyone have any suggestions on how to help someone in your family who is living with diabetes?

[Don't ask more than five questions about the movie. If your group is having a good discussion not related to the questions above, feel free to go with the flow—just as long as the comments contribute to the understanding of diabetes.]

6. **Say:** Now let's get to the fun part of the session. Let's do some role playing.
7. **Ask:** Could I have two volunteers—one man and one woman? *[You may need to select two people if no one volunteers.]* I want you two to pretend that you are Calvin and his wife. Calvin wants to eat some cake for dessert, but his wife is reluctant because she is worried about his health. *[Allow the volunteers to act out this scene in their own way. Offer to give them 5 minutes to prepare if desired. Tell them that they have 5 minutes to perform the role-playing scene.]*
8. **Say** *[at the end of the act]:* That was great. Thanks! Does anyone have any comments or questions about the skit?

Make sure that the following points are brought out in the discussion:

- Nagging or fear tactics are usually not helpful.
- Nagging, anger, and fear may push people further away emotionally.
- Emotional support and understanding are needed for behavior change.

[If needed, ask for two more volunteers to role-play a scene without using fear tactics, anger, or nagging.]

9. **Say:** We're getting close to the end of the session now. We're almost finished. I just have one more question for you.

10. **Ask:** Are there things that you'll do differently in your own life or your family's life now that you have watched this film and have attended this discussion?

Conclusion

Say: We want to thank each of you for participating in our group discussion. The information that we have shared is of enormous value to you and your lives. Please go out and spread the message of diabetes control and prevention. Does anybody have any questions before we wrap up? *[Answer questions briefly.]* Then we thank you *[optional: "and would like to give you a small gift as a thank you for your time spent with us this evening"]*.



[Healthful incentive gifts might include water bottles, pedometers, healthful snacks, or other healthful-behavior reminders from your organization (e.g., a refrigerator magnet reminder).]



Homework Exercise

Distribute the NDEP brochure *4 Steps to Control Your Diabetes for Life* as take-home reading, and ask participants to discuss the brochure's contents with family members and friends.